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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding student teaching supervision which may result from the individually idiosyncratic and imprecise use of language in clinical instruction and evaluative judgments. Case study methodology is used to compare the language used and the underlying images of "student teaching" and "effective teaching" held by individuals within the student teaching triad as they try to communicate expectations and build understanding in the novice teacher. Focus is on the explicit language and underlying implicit judgment criteria and processes of the university supervisor, cooperating teacher, and student teacher. The specific objectives of this study are: (1) to identify the ideas, thoughts and images held by the student teacher, supervisor and cooperating teacher during the student teaching experience; and (2) to analyze these data to compare the language used and meanings held by members of the triad. (Author/JD)

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THREE PERSPECTIVES ON THE LANGUAGE OF SUPERVISION: HOW WELL DO THE UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR, COOPERATING TEACHER, AND STUDENT TEACHER UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER?

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Introduction: As you were driving through a small town, you may have heard someone say, "Look at the standpipe!" Your reaction was dependent on your experience, where you have lived, and/or how much you have read about standpipes. [As far as we know, no major works are available on the subject of standpipes!]

If you have never heard of the word before, you would not know whether to look up or down. If you had some prior experience with plumbing, you may have tried to find a vertical pipe in someone's basement. On the other hand, your background may have included climbing standpipes, and you knew they could refer to the large towers for a town's water supply. However, even with this knowledge, you might still be unsure whether you would see a tall cylindrical tower or a tower looking like a windmill with a large tank set on top.

What this illustrates is that the same word may not convey the same meaning to different people. Some simply may not know the meaning of the word. Others may know the phonetic or literal meaning but have very different associations for their understanding of the word. Their frame of reference or

experience may cause semantic confusion. Finally, others understand perfectly what you mean when you say standpipe, but the details of the images in their head are somewhat different.

All of this about the role of language as providing conceptual and communicative labels for objects, events, and ideas seems to be rather self-evident when we think about it. We have learned to operate in a world with these areas of ambiguity of words and their meanings. Yet if this ambiguity surrounds circumstances or a situation of great importance to us, we feel uncomfortable and do not function effectively. For example, probably most of us have at sometime had a physician deliver some unwelcome bit of information to us, and after our brain returns to operating rationally, we want to know exactly what was meant. Ambiguity in this circumstance is not a comfortable state of affairs! A degree of dissonance is important to thinking, but uncertainty under a condition of threat is counterproductive to clear thinking and acting.

In teaching, we need to function in a world of ambiguity. Despite our increased knowledge from research about the variables and prequisites of effective instruction, many of our decisions during teaching moments are made without certain knowledge of the either key factors or outcomes. Floden and Clark (1987) discuss those "problems of uncertainty." Similarly, Barnes (1987) talks about the "intentions, problems and dilemmas" which are inherent in teaching.

Focus of this Study: The purpose of this paper is to look at the uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding student teaching supervision which may result from the individually idiosyncratic and imprecise use of language in clinical instruction and evaluative judgments. We will use case study methodology to compare the language used and the underlying images of "student teaching" and "effective teaching" held by individuals within the student teaching triad as they try to communicate expectations and build understanding in the novice teacher. Our focus here on the explicit language and underlying implicit judgment criteria and processes of the university supervisor, cooperating teacher, and student teacher is an extension of our previous work in this area.

The specific objectives of this study are: (a) to identify the ideas, thoughts and images held by the student teacher, supervisor and cooperating teacher during the student teaching experience, and (b) to analyze these data to compare the language used and meanings held by members of the triad.

Discussion and Rationale for Concern Regarding Language in Supervision: Costa and Marzario (1987) in their article, "Teaching the Language of Thinking," discuss the linguistic nature of instruction. They state, (referring to H. Green and Smith, 1982) that "language is used by teachers to frame the presentation of content,... tasks,... and norms. Language also creates classroom culture...and language labels" (pp. 29-30). Their article articulates the necessity of the precise use of language for encouraging students to think.

If we believe that a major goal of teacher preparation is the development of reflective pedagogical thinking (Simmons & Sparks, 1987; Simmons & Schuette, in process), then an investigation of language might provide some new perspectives on what is helping and what may be hindering the development of more sophisticated pedogogical thinking in student teachers. When a supervisor encodes one message, but the student teacher decodes a very different message, the thinking patterns of both are confused as well as communication hindered. When this occurs, several problems can result. The student teacher may pursue mis-directed learning activities and/or fail to understand important feedback provided by the supervisor. A stressful atmosphere not conducive to clear communication and thinking may develop. In addition, crucial evaluations of the student teacher's progress may be made using erroneous perceptions and information as evidence.

Teacher educators responsible for implementing student teaching programs use a variety of means to prevent misunderstandings. General guidelines, memos, handbooks, seminars, and conferences are all efforts to create and communicate certain common understandings among those involved in the student teaching experience. However, these efforts may not create the desired level of understanding because of people's (a) different images of effective teaching in the classroom, and (b) the language they use to communicate these images or messages. This lack of congruence or integration of sense making is a concern of many teachers and teacher educators (Webb, 1981; Clandinin, 1986; Sergiovanni, 1985; Smyth, 1986; Garman, 1986).

A study by Calderhead (1987, p.7) in England focused on such problems of communication among the student teacher, tutor (college supervisor), and teacher. In this case, the student teacher was unclear, even at the end of the term, about the meaning of the pedagogical term "structure." In addition, student teachers were very superficial in their analysis of their teaching. When they were asked "how it went?", they replied, "OK" or "it went fine." Calderhead found the attitude among students was that the field experience was "an assessment hurdle" rather than being a time of intense pedogogical learning. One result of this attitude was great concern with "fitting in". Very little interactive communication occurred among the three individuals about doubts or disagreements concerning even standard classroom teaching procedures. Calderhead concludes that this study "suggests that tutors and students often don't share a common language or set of understandings of classroom processes, and that the roles and relationships that are essential for a serious, meaningful professional discussion about practice are frequently not established." (p. 8)

The student teaching experience can be viewed as a situation in which each member of the triad has a story to tell to the other members. In fact, each person is creating meaning as events unfold in that particular situation. However, shared meanings cannot occur if the language used is either phonetically or semantically different or if the individuals do not linguistically interact. Phonetic differences are often mediated by the use of common artifacts. Different implicit meanings or understandings are much harder to identify and mediate.

The literature on supervisory ideas or thoughts (Moon & Niemeyer, 1987; Bolin, 1987), metaphors (Sergiovanni, 1985), teacher planning and thinking (Clark & Lampert, 1986), and teacher's personal practical knowledge and images (Clandinin, 1986; Rust, 1987) can give us some indication of how pedagogical knowledge and understandings are constructed through actions by teachers, supervisors and student teachers in the school setting (Moon, Simmons, & Niemeyer, 1988). As Clandinin notes, "...teacher practices are expressions of the images the teacher holds" (1986, p. 166).

Supervisors, cooperating teachers, and student teachers may each have rather different images in their mind for the same concept. Through examination of their conversation, language patterns, words used, and individual meanings held, it may be possible to identify these differences. If the labels or language used by individual to describe these ideas and images can be identified, some insights regarding the congruence or incongruence of the meanings created by members of the student teaching triad may be gained.

As we consider such a linguistic perspective on teaching and teacher education (Simmons & Sparks, 1987; Simmons & Schuette, in process), it is important to remember that communication and sense-making are neither one-way nor linear processes. The responses which supervisors provide to questions and statements made by the teacher-in-training are often as crucial as the originally intended message in the supervisor's mind. The supervisor's responses may completely reframe the meaning being created in the prospective teacher's mind (and vice versa, we should add). In other words, supervisory communication is a two-way exchange of words by people seeking to create shared meanings. Florio-Ruane (1987) similarly discusses how crucial are a teacher's

responses to a child's writing. This is no less true of the supervisor's response to the verbal explanations, questions, or written notes of the student teacher and other interaction with the cooperating teacher.

In a broader sense, Peter Elbow states the following in his discussion of the value of dialectic in developing thinking:

> The dialectical pattern of thinking provides some relief from this structural difficulty inherent in knowing. Since perception and cognition are processes in which the organism "contracts" what it sees or thinks according to models already there, the organism tends to throw away or distort material that does not fit this model. The surest way to get hold of what your present frame blinds you to is to try to adopt the opposite frame, that is, to reverse your model. A persons who can live with contradiction and exploit it --- who can use conflicting models --- can simply see and think. (1986, p.241)

In an atmosphere of uncertainty, a person needs the ability to engage in the dialectic thinking which Elbow is describing. However, this presupposes skill in the use of language to label concept examples, provide meaning, give responses, and articulate the contradictions evident in the context. Student teachers are beginners in this kind of world. If they are receiving conflicting messages in their training, we are asking them to deal with ambiguity at two levels --- i.e. as a student and a teacher --- and in a stressful atmosphere of professional and personal evaluation. This seems to be asking a great deal of anyone, even a seasoned veteran teacher.

Similarly, the importance of rich, detailed, and contextual narration in providing understanding about our experience is illustrated by Kalmbach and Powers (1982) in their account of a story by John Smith and Pocahontas. They ask the reader to consider two texts as examples:

stars faded
eastern sky grew light
clouds above horizon turned pink
sun rose

or

> I woke early restless and still tired at first. Lying in bed, I saw the stars fade and the eastern sky grow light, then the clouds above the horizon turned pink, and watching the sun rise, I was glad I was awake and starting a new day. (p.99)

The differences between the list and the narrative are apparent. The list reports the event, but any interpretation and comprehension requires the reader to supply images of context. The narrative, on the other hand, builds images and clearer, fuller understanding for the writer as well as for readers.

The related question for consideration by those who make up the student teaching triad is: do we hinder the process of narration (i.e. complex languaging and thinking) because of the program structure and the narrowly conceived artifacts used in conventional supervision? One of the objectives of this study was to examine this possibility. Rosenblatt talks about the importance and implications of "linked images" (1978, p.175). The images held by members of the student teaching triad may or may not be linked or integrated among the people involved. Analyzing the narrative accounts of student teaching (i.e. journals, supervisory notes, interview data) provides some answers about the degree of overlap or linkage of images among the student teacher, cooperating teacher, and university supervisor.

The importance of studying the language of student teaching growth and supervision is perhaps best summarized by Elaine Allen Karls, a field supervisor for Michigan State University, in an unpublished paper submitted for one of her graduate classes. These excerpts are from her paper:

> The whole of my teaching/supervisory role in working with student teachers is defined by language. [....] I am now consciously aware of my "reading" of teaching settings, my use of language to interpret those "readings" to my students, and choices I make in pursuing or cutting off avenues of talk about the student's experience. [.....] Believing language is a tool for thinking, I am letting the students do most of the talking now. [.....] The beginning teacher has just one point of access to professional insight ... the tool of language.

Study Design & Research Methodologies Used: The data which were analyzed came from two case studies involving all three members of the student teaching triad. Both situations focused on elementary student teachers working with experienced university supervisors and cooperating teachers in public school settings. With the exception of one student teacher who was male, the other five individuals were female. The length of time for this study was eleven weeks which is one term of full-time student teaching at Michigan State University.

Cognitive mapping using a format of circle maps (Moon & Niemeyer, 1987; Niemeyer & Moon, 1986) and criteria lists/matrices (Simmons, 1986, 1988) has been used effectively to identify the thoughts, concepts, and evaluative judgment criteria used by supervisors in their work. The comprehensiveness

and validity of these previously used methodologies were strengthened in this study through gathering these additional artifacts related to the student teacher's work and to the supervisory process:

(a) naturally occurring data --- e.g. informal notes, observation notes, instructional plans, and

(b) special data collection --- i.e. cognitive mapping, think aloud structured interviews, informal journaling, ethnographic observation of supervisory interaction, and audio-taping of supervisory conferences.

Two researchers (Moon & Niemeyer) were primarily responsible for the use of these methods. In addition, a third researcher (Simmons) interviewed and debriefed the two field researchers bi-weekly to gain additional understanding of the data gathered and methodology being used.

Analysis of Data:

Analysis of data indicates that three levels of communication were found within interaction occurring among the student teacher, cooperating teacher, and university supervisor in the triad. These levels were: (1) what a word or phrase denotes, i.e. the basic meaning or definition of a word, (2) the implicit message, or what the connotation was, and (3) the referent or context for a word or phrase. Each of these will be discussed separately.

Level One: Misunderstanding of Definitions for Language Used. Three examples from among several which were found in the data gathered will be used to illustrate misunderstandings occurring at this level. The researchers found that such misunderstandings occurred with each individual and across conferences throughout the student teaching experience.

The first example was the word "rapport". Apparently, members of the triad are familiar with the word but not congruent regarding its definition. The student teacher interpreted its meaning as "responsiveness to pupils" and/or a kind of "conversational involvement" with them. The cooperating teacher used it in the context of "getting to know students". This seemed to mean knowing what their interests were, what they enjoyed doing, and some information about family and friends. The university supervisor viewed rapport more as a personality trait or a psychological attribute without being explicit about how to acquire or express it with pupils.

The phrase, "developmental levels" denoted different meanings to student teachers and cooperating teachers. The student teacher talked of developmental levels of children as "what does and doesn't work with these kids." Cooperating teachers used it to refer to psychological frameworks of development found in textbooks. However, it was at times used especially in reference to having "realistic" expectations for pupils' academic achievement. Both cooperating teachers and university supervisors spoke of the student teacher's developmental level in general terms. At times, it seemed to function as a defense or accepted explanation for the student teacher's lack of overt success.

A third example in this category was the expression "firm but fair." This term has great coinage in the conventional wisdom of teaching, and research supports the importance of a teacher's consistency and fairness. The meanings attached to these words were quite different for two members of the triad. The student teacher thought "firm" meant "flexible", but cooperating teachers used it to refer to a teacher's "set expectations" for pupils. Some teachers seemed to suggest that "fairness" meant "clear directions and consequences" for the pupils. Student teachers were concerned about "equity" for pupils, although that seemed to be an unclear concept also.

Level Two: Implicit Messages of Language Used Differences were apparent in the meanings which individuals attached to concepts such as lesson planning and preparation. While university supervisors spoke of "preparation" (a general, broad view on a holistic level), the student teacher attended to "lesson planning" (immediate need). On the other hand, cooperating teachers seemed to think of preparation as the prospective teacher's command of content knowledge for teaching pupils and deciding on activities for class.

Supervisors talked about pupils' "use of time", but student teachers talked about "pupils' waste of time". Supervisors were concerned with "setting limits", but student teachers wondered if they could "handle pupils". Supervisors said "students were prepared and involved," while student teachers found out that "tons of stuff kept them (pupils) busy."

It seems that the supervisors and cooperating teachers were more concerned about broad instructional issues, while the student teachers were concerned with the present moment with a more narrow focus on surviving as teachers themselves and of controlling pupils. There was some evidence from the data that student teachers were somewhat more negative in their thinking and had not yet begun to any degree to thoughtfully connect the theories which they had previously learned with their current experiences. In effect, they are yet too wrapped up in developmentally wrestling with their own emotional survival, the threat of "wanting to look good" for an evaluator, and the role adjustments involved in moving from college student to novice teacher.

Such findings are, of course, consistent with Frances Fuller's (1969) theory regarding stages of teacher development and with what Simmons and Sparks (1987) have discussed concerning the difficulty of enhancing reflective pedagogical decision-making in beginning teachers who lack both professional experience and self-confidence. According to the perspective of this study, such variance in the focus and content of thinking among members of the supervisory triad is revealed by the different language patterns occurring. The result of this is to hinder communication among the three members of the supervisory triad.

Level Three: Referents for Language Used Two examples best illustrate this language gap. During one supervisor-student teacher conference, the supervisor suggested the use of a seating chart as one technique for providing some structure for the class, making it more predictable for everyone, and as a

way to learn pupil names more rapidly. However, the student teacher's response was, "I do not like to assign seats alphabetically. I like to let them choose their seats". The student teacher never understood the purpose and type of seating chart being suggested by the supervisor, although, to the researcher/ethnographic observer, the idea seemed to be clearly presented. The language (meaning) gap remained between the supervisor and the student teacher.

The second example involves the word "anecdotes." This word was used by a cooperating teacher to suggest a teaching technique that would clarify the presentation of content and help pupils link today's content to previously presented content. The teacher felt this would be an especially good technique to use in teaching history. When the student teacher used the word later in her informal journal narration, the reference was to class control and the involvement of students. The idea of aiding knowledge representation for pupils' learning did not occur to her.

Individuals' reference to use of a chalkboard carried similar incongruencies. Student teachers usually referred to use of chalkboard as a pupil control and focus technique, rather than as aiding information linkage and transfer.

On a more positive note, one student teacher in a letter to the university supervisor said, "I never did understand what "new ideas" meant on the [supervisor's observation] form], but now I do." He realized this after he had started writing about his experiences and responding in discussion to open-ended topics in seminars. In this case, the experience of writing provided a means to clarify his pedagogical thinking, language, and classroom actions.

Images of the Student Teaching Experience Held by Members of the Triad The images of student teaching and what it involves were quite different among the three persons involved, and these differences persisted from the beginning to the end of the term.

At the beginning of the term, and to some extent throughout the term, the student teachers were rather egocentric. Their primary questions were: "Can I perform? Can I handle the kids?". These images and ideas consumed much of their thinking. After one conference, a student teacher said, "she [the supervisor] didn't even mention I was playing with my necklace throughout the lesson." From her clinical instructor perspective, the supervisor seemed to be choosing and ranking what feedback topics needed attention now and what could wait. However, the student teacher was most concerned with "how I look and sound", not "how am I doing?". There was little concern by the student teacher about academic achievement of the pupils. This concern with self and her own survival was illustrated also by a student teacher's use of the word "fear" three times within a three minute time segment in response to the question, "Any concerns?"

As the term came to an end, the successful student teachers seemed to have most of their thinking centered on "getting my own class."

The cooperating teachers seemed most concerned initially about "what does the University expect?" and "will the student teacher be a reflection of my success as a teacher?". As the term progressed, these images of their own efforts seemed to shift towards more identification of themselves as being an extension of the university's teacher preparation efforts. Often program suggestions were made to the university supervisor about "what we (university and cooperating teacher) can do better next time".

The image in the mind of the university supervisor seemed to be their responsibility for stimulating and coordinating a situation of "all systems go". Their thoughts seemed to center around getting the triad and supervisory system underway, getting everyone working together, and starting the meetings, classes, forms, conferences, etc. rolling. Toward the end of the term, the supervisor's image emphasized "closure" and "professional growth and jobs" for the student teacher.

Student teachers felt the university supervisors were too "picky" in their feedback during conferences. There was doubt expressed about the value of criticism regarding what were regarded to be details. It is ironic to note that while they were critical of "picky" comments, it was precisely the picky things or details about which they were concerned. It was evident the student teachers had difficulty stepping back from their own interests and seeing the larger picture.

Language Patterns & Syntax A difference was found in syntax and the major focus of comments when those of the cooperating teachers were compared with the student teachers.

One interesting finding was that the syntax of student teachers' writing was different in the open-ended letter writing than the completion of weekly reflection-oriented forms required by one university supervisor. The syntax of the student teacher's informal, journal-like letters was more complex and integrated, and thus, we could analyze their thinking and language more fully.

In general, the student teacher used short, simple phrases while the teacher tended to use longer, more complex phrases and sentences. The focus of the student teacher's writing was more on self. However, the teachers' comments had an "others" focus. Teachers seemed more concerned with a long duration of time and with a future orientation, but student teachers were concerned about now, or at most, a short period of time.

The following examples illustrate these differences. In separate interviews with the researcher, the teacher and student teacher were both asked about their concerns or frustration from the day just finished. The student teacher responded:

- "I feel uncomfortable in class."
- "Kids keep asking silly questions."
- "Why are kids in rows?"
- "They don't understand the textbook."
- "What do I do to help a dyslexic child?"

Certainly, these are sincere questions that need to be answered, but an "I" framework dominates, as do thoughts about demands of the present moment.

In sharp contrast, the cooperating teacher's responses about the frustrations of the day just completed were:

- " ... that the entire day has gone by and I have not spent time with each child in my room"
- " ... that I am teaching in isolation---nothing I teach will be re-enforced at home or even by next year's teacher"
- " ... that so much of what we do is because it looks good or it sounds good when you tell about it"

By contrast with the student teacher, then, the cooperating teacher is concerned with broader, long-term, curricular and educational issues as she evaluated the school day and its events.

The difference(s) in images held, the syntax, and psychological focus between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher is evident. What happens when two people with these conceptual and emotional differences try to work shoulder-to-shoulder? It seems that bridges of language must be built or genuine communication of meaning and understanding will not result. This will not occur in a few brief conferences. It will take recognition of the problem and substantial time and persistent effort by everyone involved.

Feedback from the University Supervisor to the Student Teacher When the feedback provided to student teachers by college supervisors was analyzed, an interesting but disjunctive pattern emerged. It was not constant, but often the pattern moved from broad, theoretical statements dealing with effective teaching to unconnected statements dealing with specific technical aspects of lesson presentation, e.g. the best use of A-V equipment. Here is an example of a supervisor's conference with a student teacher:

> Supervisor's First Comment: " ... (You should) present background information when presenting answers. Students will recall answers more readily if they are given additional information."
>
> Student Teacher's Response: "uh-uh"
>
> Supervisor's Second Comment: " ... (You should) use the chalkboard or overhead --- give clear concise directions."

While both comments are valuable, the rationale for a patttern of complex - simple - complex topics and language is not clear. The analysis of further data should shed more light on this question.

Another pattern which was often noted was the shift from general and/or conceptual understanding (i.e., "use of prior knowledge") to details such as "don't use the word 'guys'". This shift in language pattern and topics seems to fragment the orderly development of student teacher thinking and perhaps even, indirectly weaken student teacher self-confidence through creating a situation in which the she/he experiences confusion. This seems particularly true when one remembers this interaction and pedagogical sense-making usually occurs within a 20 to 30 minute conference. Even if such feedback occurs in writing so that more thought can be directed at orderly communication of ideas, the richness of shared thought and meaning clarification as an interactive experience is probably lost.

Additional "Between the Cracks" Data of Related Interest First, it was apparent lesson planning is of great importance to the student teacher when the university supervisor visits the classroom. It is usually the first type of evidence about the student teacher's current level of growth which supervisor receives from the student teacher and the first thing asked about in a conference. Does this imply to the student teacher that lesson planning is the heart of teaching? Sometimes in human communication, it is not what is said as much as the order in which different content is discussed which is communicative.

Secondly, the spoken language and the nonverbal communication appeared, at times, to send messages that were misconstrued. The contribution of non-verbal communication in triad interaction should be investigated with appropriate methodology in future studies.

Thirdly, there were examples when the choice of vocabulary seemed to influence language patterns and the atmosphere for communication. For example, as we listened to the student teachers and read their comments, we noticed a collegial, informal vocabulary in use. Some of these phrases were:

"She's a drill sergeant."

"I was uptight about your visit."

"I try to be a real person."

"I guess they were a bit out of hand."

"I flopped today."

On the other hand, supervisors occasionally used these or similar words, but more often used pedagogical language. This may have hindered fuller communication and understanding because the student teacher would often revert to monosyllabic, passive responses to such supervisor "explanations".

A parallel to this was the threat or discomfort which student teachers felt from also hearing the language patterns of pupils. When student teachers heard pupil phrases such as: "the big game", "the dance", "doing drugs", "getting it on", "I didn't see anything", "my parents want me to ...", they often felt threatened in their novice role as adults and teachers. Probably this was not because of their lack of understanding of what, for example, "getting it on" means, but more likely it was a realization of what the image was in the pupil's mind which made the student teacher

uncomfortable. In turn, the student teacher often would to respond to pupils with management-oriented language in these situations. It is doubtful that the student teachers recognized they now had responsibilities toward each of the worlds suggested by those words.

Fourthly, each member of the triad has a message to send. Both expressing and hearing the messages are important and serious for the successful preparation of teachers and learning in the classroom. Most of the messages we have heard before in bits and pieces in our supervisory experience and research, but to see them appear in the analysis of these data from more than one source was especially powerful. The story to be told by the student teachers is perhaps best summarized in this statement made by a student teacher at the end of the term. It illustrates a student teacher's concern with communication and language.

> (Cooperating teacher) has a vast vocabulary that allows him to say exactly what he means. Knowing this, I am proud and flattered by my evaluation. ...although Mr. ( ) thinks my ability to think quickly and clearly is impressive, the students sometimes feel frustrated and ask me to slow down.
>
> Mr. ( ) also gave me a <u>very nice</u> evaluation. [However,] I was more pleased with my <u>oral</u> evaluation from him than my written one. Mr.( ) is the type of person who speaks with his face and body. The words themselves can't express some of the emotion he puts into them. ...also, the [written] evaluation was not very specific as to what I've done. ...when we discussed it, he gave me specific examples. ...all in all, my evaluations have given me a boost of confidence that is well needed. [Now, this] ... has taken some of the pressure off. ...my thinking has been less restrained.

It is important to remember that this was said by a student teacher who received an outstanding evaluation and performed successfully throughout the term. It was not the case of a bitter or failing student teacher. Nevertheless, the stress of the student teaching experience is apparent. Trying to please everyone and interpret messages of different types and detail had "restrained" her thinking. The pressure placed on the student teacher was not malicious nor an attempt to confuse him/her. Quite the contrary! It was more often an unawareness of how meaning was often confused and/or changed when supervisory conversations were placed into a larger context of the clinical learning and evaluative judgments occurring during the student teaching experience.

As a fifth point, cooperating teachers seem to be saying they are concerned. They want to do their best and do what is expected of them. They feel responsible for the success of the student teacher, even protective. One cooperating teacher said, "I wondered if I should protect ( ) from the college supervisor." Another teacher said, "She was like the daughter I never had." Perhaps not explicitly but implicitly, cooperating teachers are asking for time, time for themselves, and the student teacher. They are trying to balance the needs of their own pupils, the often egocentric focus of the student teacher, and their own professional vision.

Finally, what is the "story to be told" by university supervisors? This is the most difficult of all perhaps to capably investigate and describe because, as researchers and supervisors ourselves, we are closer to this role and work side by side with these instructors. Perhaps better than anyone else, field instructors recognize the conflicts within their own role and the

demands on student teachers. Recognizing these demands, the effective university supervisor makes gigantic efforts to fulfill this multiple role. It was evident from these data that they wanted cooperating teachers, student teachers, and the pupils in the classroom to be successful.

What would be the primary messages sent by members of the triad? How might they be summarized? Perhaps they would include the following in priority list. Student teachers want to function as one person in the field setting. Cooperating teachers are searching for time and better understanding of their role. University supervisors are asking to be taken seriously, which means making professional and instructional choices, not being messengers for others.

Summary and Implications of this Study: This study and others by the MSU Supervisory Judgment Research Project team have underscored the importance and complexity of a linguistic and cognitive perspective in researching supervision. The following points warrant attention in further research and development of improved practice.

1. The quality and quantity of a student teacher's prior clinical experience as well as his/her disciplinary and pedagogical conceptual knowledge must be considered in facilitating optimal learning in field settings.

2. Interaction language opportunities, both oral and narrative, need to be increased to clarify understandings among members of the student teaching triad.

3. Evaluation processes as presently done seem to hinder the student teacher's thinking. How might the processes of formative and summative evaluation be reconsidered within the student teaching experience?

4. The role of the university supervisor needs to be redefined in light of recent judgment, linguistic, and conceptual research perspectives.

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